

Coos River S.T.E.P. News

P.O Box 5907 Charleston, Oregon 97420

February 2012

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These members have made a donation to Coos River STEP recently, which is tax deductible. These donations are appreciated, and this is what keeps Coos River STEP able to pay the matinance and power bills.

(THANKS)

HATCHERY NEWS

The Chinook eggs that are here at the Noble Creek Hatchery are all hatched for a total of 511,000 except the last group 72,000 that's just starting to hatch, they were put into the hatchbox on Jan. 16. Gary brought the last 30,000 Chinook eggs out to Lonny's hatchbox on Feb. 6, and put them in the hatchbox that Lonny had all ready for them. We will probably need to keep these last two groups separate from the first groups, because of age and size difference. Each group will each need a different size of feed, we will probably have two dates for releasing of our pre-smolts this year.

Harold and Don Perkins came out Tuesday and cut some used carpet that Harold got donated into strips to put on some of the dam boards to keep them from leaking. We also need to replace some of the carpet that is tearing and coming off the boards. We also started the creek water down through the holding pond, to wash out some of the gravel and mud that the high water put in there. This really helps the cleanup job.

Your dues for 2012 are due now

This year we have 33 families that have not paid their dues for 2012, your last letter will be the March 2012 issue. If you have already paid for 2012, thank you. If your not sure you can look on the mailing label that has your name on it plus the last year that we have recorded your dues. It should be a 12 if you have paid. If you are sure that you have paid and we have not gave you credit, please call 888-5906 to make corrections, we need your support

Our Newsletter depends on your dues!
Please Pay yours today!

FISHING FOR THE FUTURE OF FISH

BY ANGELA ORTHMEYER

In rough, grey Pacific waters off the rocky Oregon coast, the fishing vessel *FV Joanne* stalks a school of wild salmon. On board the vessel, Captain Paul Merz patrols the murky ocean depths, anticipating a catch that could eventually help save an endangered species. As the fisherman carefully brings in long lines of fish and releases them from hooks one by one, he removes small samples of the flesh. He then jots down the geographical location of the vessel, the air temperature, and the sea-water salinity – oceanographic information that will be sent to a marine science center along with the salmon samples. Within 48 hours, scientists will have access to the genetic data of fish caught during this expedition. The information gathered by Captain Merz will help scientists make management decisions that could determine the fate of entire populations of fish.

Counter to the popular public perception of the fishing industry as one that exploits with an intensity that cannot be sustained, many fishermen and members of fishing communities are actively working to preserve the future of fish and the fishing trade. They're conducting research alongside scientists, inventing selective nets, setting aside parts of the ocean as protected areas free from fishing, and educating the public about which fish are the best to consume. During travels that extended from the East to West coasts of the United States, I met with members of preservation-oriented fishing communities, including four innovators who are playing leading roles in the effort to protect fish and the world's oceans.

CHARLESTON, OR- Late one afternoon in July, I met Captain Merz in front of his stilted, white house in Charleston. Wringing his grease-stained hands, Captain Merz took a break from engine repairs to talk about his fight for the survival of wild Pacific salmon. He said that he hoped that his efforts to restore wild salmon populations will give his son a chance to earning a living wage in the fishing industry. As we discussed his recent research endeavors, Captain Merz leaned one arm against his red pickup truck, a baseball hat with the words "Project CROOS" shadowing his tanned face, his eyes shining and red-rimmed with exhausted intensity. During the past few years, Captain Merz used his fishing vessel more for scientific research than for salmon fishing.

Captian Merz is a leader among a group of 500 fishermen who collect samples of salmon for genetic testing. The effort is a part of an Oregon State University research initiative called "Project CROOS", an acronym for "Collaborative Research on Oregon Ocean Salmon". Beginning in 2006, Project CROOS provided equipment and training for fishermen along the US West Coast to collect samples of fish for genetic testing. The genetic data collected by fishermen informs scientists about the origin of different fish populations that come from distinct rivers in Washington, Oregon and California. Some of these rivers are host to healthy fish populations while other rivers yield salmon populations that are diminishing in number each year.

Once salmon migrate from the rivers to the Pacific Ocean, it is impossible to visually distinguish "healthy-population" salmon from at-risk salmon that originate from diminishing populations. Genetic testing allows fishermen to identify the salmon populations that are acceptable to catch and to identify which populations should be left alone. This reprieve may give unhealthy populations a change to recover. Thus, efforts by fishermen involved with Project CROOS are contributing to the recovery of endangered Pacific salmon populations along America's West coast. These fishers are giving fish a future, and perhaps allowing other young fishermen futures in fishing.

A Sage Magazine Article (<http://sagemagazine.org/?p=1251>)

Economic impact of STEP rearing and acclimation projects.

Sport fishery harvest of salmon and steelhead of Tenmile, Coos, and Coquille STEP produced fish is estimated to provide substantial input of monies to Oregon state and local economies

Coos fall Chinook	\$2,110,011 a
Coquille fall Chinook	\$1,016,160 b
Tenmile, Coos, and Coquille winter steelhead.....	\$698,250 c
Total	\$3,824,421

a 24,253 angler days expended for Chinook at a value of \$87.00/angler day. Four hours per angler day. Angling effort based on averages between the statistical creel survey conducted in 2009 and 2010 in the Coos. Value of an angler day from a conversation with Christine Broniak on March 11, 2010.

b 11,680 angler days expended for Chinook at a value of \$87.00/angler day. Same value applied to the Coos and from the same source. Angling effort from a 2010 statistical creel survey in the Coquille.

c 4,655 steelhead are harvested in the Tenmile, Coos, and Coquille Fish District annually based on punch card estimates with an average economic impact of \$150.00 per fish. Number of steelhead harvested was an average of punch card estimates for the winter of 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Oregon Commercial Salmon Fisheries Attrition

In 1979 combined state level personal income impacts for Oregon from the commercial and recreational salmon fishery were \$317 Million. In 1988 combined state level income impacts were \$243 Million for Oregon south of Cape Falcon. By 2005, Oregon's average state level income impacts had dropped to \$64 Million. (Income figures are inflation adjusted. This data is from National Marine Fisheries Service.) California income impacts reflect the same downward trend.

Active troll salmon vessels in Oregon dropped from a high of 3,875 vessels in 1980 to 390 in 2011. The troll fleet in California dropped from 4,919 vessels in 1978 to 738 in 2004. Washington State's troll fleet has decreased from 3,041 vessels in 1978 to 86 active vessels in 2004. (PFMC)

The drop in the number of active salmon trollers in Oregon is almost entirely the result of poor Chinook production on the Klamath and Sacramento Rivers, poor Coho production from Oregon's coastal watersheds, and attrition in the active salmon fleet, due to the lack of viable salmon seasons.

Most recently Oregon salmon trollers were faced with a three month closure in 2005, an almost total closure in 2006, a dismal harvest in 2007, total closures in 2008 and 2009 and extremely poor harvests in 2010 and 2011.

Compiled by Paul Merz

**POTLUCK 6:00 MEETING 7:00 TUE. FEBRUARY 14th
NOBLE CREEK HATCHERY**



Coos River S.T.E.P. Association
Coos River S.T.E.P. needs your help to insure that there will be rivers to fish and salmon and steelhead to fish for into the future. Sign up today as a SUPPORTER & volunteer! Oregon's fish need your help!

MEMBERSHIP: \$15.00 Family

Name _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please make checks payable to: Coos River STEP P.O.BOX 5907 CHARLESTON, Oregon 97420

JOIN STEP!

You can **SUPPORT** Coos River STEP Association and receive this news letter for only \$15.00 per Family! (Tax deductible!)

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clyde@noblecreekfish.net
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